DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 181 317 CE 023 941

AUTHOR Halperin, Samuel
TITLE Emerging Educational Policy Issues in the Federal City: A Report from Washington. Occasional Paper No. 42.
INSTITUTION Ohio State Univ., Columbus. National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
PUB DATE Apr 78
NOTE 22p.; Information in some of the tables will not reproduce well due to small print
AVAILABLE FROM National Center Publications, The National Center for Research in Vocational Educaiton, 1960 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210 ($2.20)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Policy; Educational Attitudes; Educational Legislation; *Educational Policy; Educational Research; *Federal Government; Government Role; Policy Formation; *Political Issues; Program Effectiveness; Research Needs; *Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

Both the federal administration and Congress, through more dollars and more legislation, are expanding the federal role in education. Major themes running through the various legislative proposals will result in a reduced emphasis on fiscal controls, encouragement for process-oriented requirements, better integration of federal programs, and improve federal-state-local coordination. Some additional emerging policy issues are the relationship of formal education authorities to the Youth Employment and Demonstrations Project Act (YEDPA), tax credits on tuition, a cabinet level department of education, educational quality-accountability testing of basic skills, and jobs (creation of new employment). With respect to education in particular, the executive branch is skeptical about its value and a recent informal poll of congressional staff aides revealed the following assertions or allegations: vocational education (1) provides irrelevant skills and is delinquent in providing basic skills, (2) maintains old categories over new job areas, (3) is run by an unresponsive establishment, (4) is dominated by rural and agricultural interests, (5) is discriminatory, (6) focuses too much on high school programs, (7) is delinquent in statistical program evaluation, (8) lacks effective statewide planning, (9) frustrates coordination at all levels, and (10) is too institution-oriented to school-age populations. Research is needed which would dispell or corroborate such views among policy makers. (JT)

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Occasional Paper No. 42

EMERGING EDUCATIONAL POLICY ISSUES IN THE FEDERAL CITY: A REPORT FROM WASHINGTON

by

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April 1978

CE 023 941

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- Generating knowledge through research
- Developing educational programs and products
- Evaluating individual program needs and outcomes
- Installing educational programs and products
- Operating information systems and services
- Conducting leadership development and training programs

PREFACE

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education and the Ohio State University welcome a presentation by Dr. Samuel Halperin, Director, Institute for Educational Leadership, George Washington University, entitled "Emerging Educational Policy Issues in the Federal City: A Report from Washington."

Dr. Halperin places before the seminar group his perceptions of emerging policy issues that are being addressed by the federal government. In an informal poll of congressional staff aids, Dr. Halperin has derived ten (10) serious assertions or allegations that have implications for vocational education and in particular, vocational education research and development. Specifically, he states that vocational education research and development must address these assertions or allegations in order for vocational education to move forward.

Dr. Halperin has extensive experience in education and government. He attended Illinois Institute of Technology, Washington University, and Columbia University. He has been Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation, HEW, and Assistant Commissioner of Education for Legislation, USOE. His military accomplishments include Distinguished Military Student with a Regular Army Commission and the rank of Major. He has received many educational awards including the 1977 Distinguished Service Award of the National Association of State Boards of Education.

Two of his recent publications are: *Perspectives on Federal Education Policy* (1976) and *Federalism at the Crossroads: Improving Educational Policy Making* (1976).

It is with a great deal of pleasure that the Ohio State University and the National Center for Research in Vocational Education welcome Dr. Samuel Halperin and his presentation, "Emerging Educational Policy Issues in the Federal City: A Report from Washington."

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
The National Center for Research
in Vocational Education

EMERGING EDUCATIONAL POLICY ISSUES IN THE FEDERAL CITY:

A REPORT FROM WASHINGTON

To follow in the footsteps of David Clark, Wilbur Cohen, David Krathwohl, and Willard Wirtz in this seminar series is challenge enough for any speaker. They, after all, are distinguished educational researchers and original and creative thinkers in the worlds of education and work.

My own gifts are more modest. Trained as a political scientist, I have been privileged during the past seventeen years to participate in the fantasyland of educational policy making and to observe the changing nature of our national educational policy making process. Perhaps this experience of working in the Congress, in the Executive Branch, and with a wide variety of educational and political associations may be useful to you in making some sense out of the fast-breaking, often confusing, news stories from the nation's capital.

What I propose to put before you today is one person's perception of some of the emerging policy issues which are likely to be addressed by the federal government over the next several years. After sketching some of these issues, I can assure you that I am most eager to hear the questions which are on your minds. For I have found that the nature of your questioning helps me to get a better sense of how responsive the Washington policy system is to the pressing concerns of educators, administrators, and researchers on the various firing lines of American education.

* * *

I believe we are standing at the threshold of a new and exceedingly constructive era for the federal role in education. Only in the last several months have I seen evidence which leads me to believe that education at the federal level may be preparing to blast off into a new and higher orbit. The size and character of the Administration's new budget for Fiscal Year 1979 and the emerging character of its far-reaching legislative proposals in the field of elementary and secondary education lead me to an optimism which I personally have not experienced since the halcyon days of Frank Keppel, Harold Howe, Wilbur Cohen, John Gardner, and Lyndon Johnson.

You will recall that Jimmy Carter's election in November 1976 was heralded by many educators as a turning point in the state of benign neglect from which education in the federal city had suffered since the late sixties. Mr. Carter and the Democratic party were pledged to greater financial support for education, increased attention to the needs of graduate education and basic research, creation of a Cabinet-level Department of Education, and more sensitive leadership both in the management of federal education programs and in Washington's dealings with the states, communities, and institutions of higher learning.

But the hopefulness of 1976 was soon followed by an uncertain—some would say sour—atmosphere in 1977. Mr. Carter maintained silence throughout the year on education issues. No education legislative proposals were sent to the Congress. Recurrent reports highlighted internal

disharmony in the leadership structure of the Education Division of HEW. Foot dragging and backsliding obscured the Department of Education issue. And increased funds for education seemed to be only a dim and distant possibility as the political community began to take President Carter at his word when he talked about balancing the budget and holding the line on domestic spending programs. While Mr. Carter did add another $400 million to the budget prepared by his predecessor, President Ford, the first year of the Carter Administration seemed much in the mold of the previous dozen years. Thus, compared with meteoric rises in health and welfare expenditures, educational spending, when adjusted for inflation, placed education on a relative plateau since 1967. (See Tables 1 and 2.)

Meanwhile, on Capitol Hill, the Congress strengthened its newly-won assertion of leadership and independence from the Executive Branch, a pattern firmly set in the Nixon-Ford years when Congress and the Executive seemed continuously at loggerheads. Chairman Carl Perkins conducted the most comprehensive hearings ever on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and related extensions. With scant opposition in the Congress but with threats of veto from the White House, the Congress passed Senator Hathaway's Career Education Act—although few believed that the Congress would appropriate anything like the $400 million the new Act authorized over a five-year period. Again, as it had done during the previous eight years, Congress added substantially to the Executive Branch budget, thus keeping educational programs on a plateau, instead of pointing them downwards as recommended by previous Executive Branch budgets. Finally, Senator Ribicoff conducted the first hearings ever on bills to create a Department of Education while fifty-six senators from every part of the nation and from all ideological persuasions joined to co-sponsor his bill.* In short, at the end of 1977 Congress was firmly in the educational saddle and the Executive Branch was still largely an unknown quantity in the field of education.

But in the last several weeks, that picture has begun to change rather dramatically. The Administration's budget for Fiscal Year 1979 proposes the largest educational budget increase ever. Instead of recommending a budget averaging $1 billion below the previous year's spending levels, as Presidents Nixon and Ford had regularly done, the Carter Administration asked Congress for $1.2 billion in additional student aid funds and $1.2 billion to fund existing programs and new legislative emphases. Assuming that historical precedent holds, Congress should approve this budget increase and probably add to it as well. Thus, for the first time in many years, congressional leaders and educational associations will soon come to realize that 1978 will be an especially good one for federal funding of many—but not all—areas of education. Currently, the Education Division has a budget of $10.5 billion. By the time the Congress adjourns this fall, the budget may well exceed $13 billion.

At the same time, too, the Administration is readying a far-sighted and attractive legislative program. Some features of this package include:

- New funding for school districts with especially high concentrations of Title I children
- Incentives for the states to establish or expand compensatory education programs
- Aid to help SEAs play a more effective role in monitoring and enforcement of federal programs

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*See *Department of Education Act of 1977*; Hearings before the Committee on Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate, October 12-13, 1977, Part 1.

TABLE 1

President's Budget, As Submitted to Congress for 1965-78
Office of Education Budget as Percentage of HEW and President's Budget

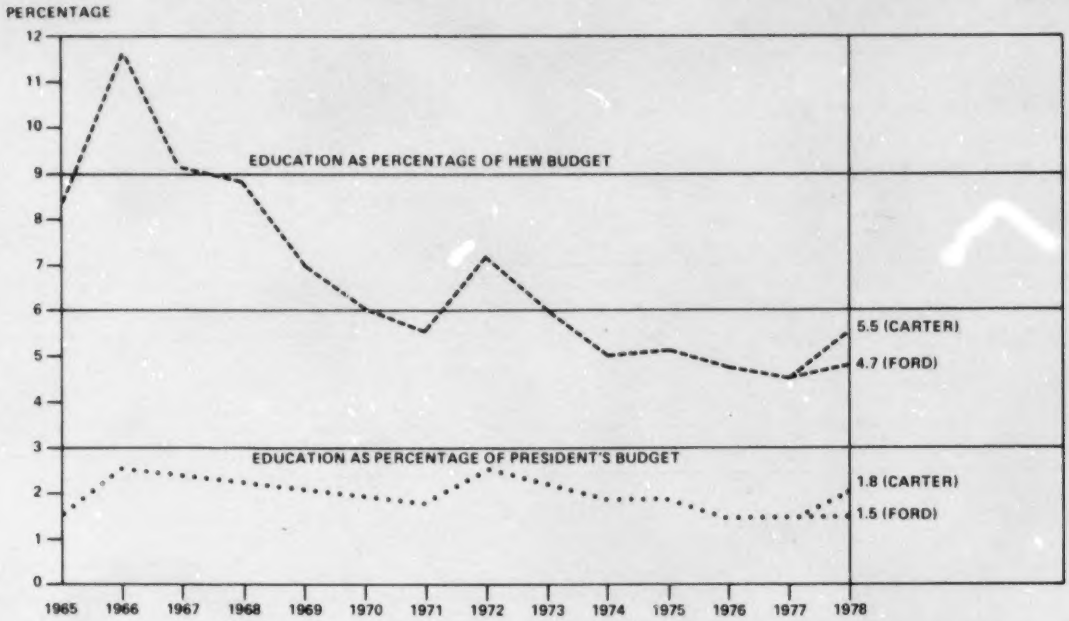
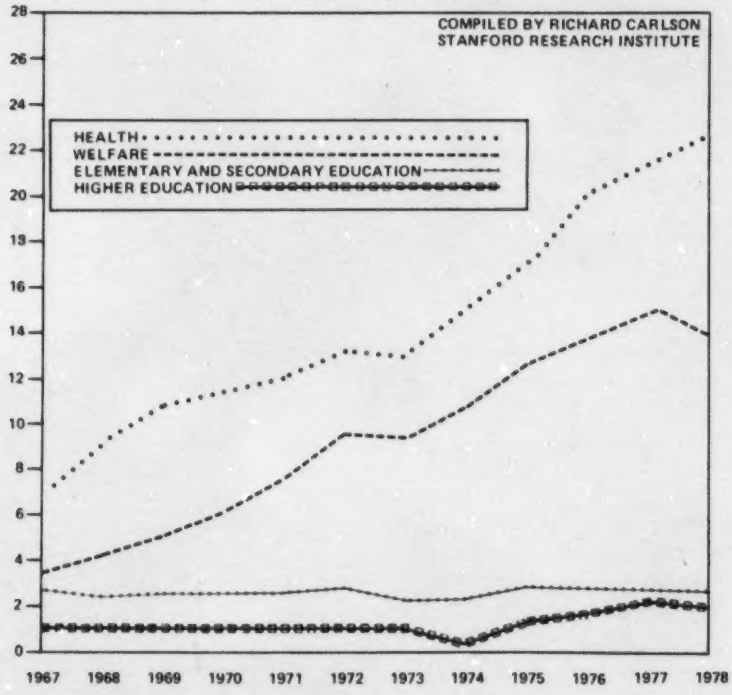


TABLE 2

Federal Health, Education, and Welfare Expenditures
(In billions of 1967 dollars)



- A new demonstration program for exemplary Title I projects which sustain academic gains
- Expanded R&D for bilingual education
- Greater flexibility in the use of Emergency School Aid Act funds
- Expanded student financial aid programs to assist middle-income families
- A new Educational Quality Act which builds on and expands the existing Special Projects Act

What is most attractive to this observer are not the facts of more dollars and more legislation. Rather I am interested in some of the philosophical underpinnings of the legislative program which is emerging at HEW and which characterizes the new Administration's approach to education. Briefly stated, the major educational themes of this Administration are, in the words of a December 1977 presentation to Jimmy Carter:

- Continued strong commitment to *access and equal opportunity* for disadvantaged, handicapped, language-limited, Indian, and minority students through major service or demonstration programs.
- Systematic exploration, through research and demonstration, of newly emerging issues broadly grouped around the concept of *quality*—basic skills, teacher development, educational technology—with the aim of developing more comprehensive programs later on.
- Systematic exploration, through research and demonstration, of newly emerging issues grouped around the concept of *relating schools to other social institutions*—schools and the employment experience, schools and other social services, parental involvement in educating their children—again with the aim of developing more comprehensive programs in three years as our knowledge base and the state-of-the-art improve.
- Reassessment of the federal government's involvement in *general school finance*, with reductions in some areas (impact aid, vocational education) and the charting or exploration of new directions in others (adult education, private education, equalizing expenditures between school districts).
- Forging a new *federal-state partnership*, through incentives, reduced paperwork, and greater flexibility, that encourages states to help carry out federal priorities where federal resources cannot meet total needs.

Translating these broad themes into pragmatic legislative approaches will, in turn, require a number of recurring elements woven throughout the Administration's proposal. Let me describe several of these approaches:

1. *A Reduced Emphasis on Fiscal Controls*

As you well know, most federal education programs are input, not output, oriented. Beneficiaries of federal funds are required to keep books showing how and where the federal dollars were expended. But only rarely are recipients required to show an *educational* gain.

If Congress and the educational community agree, the Administration would like to see federal programs provide greater selectivity and flexibility in accommodating state and local priorities and practices. Instead of operating on the "worst case" approach (which predicates federal rules and regulations on the assumption that if state and local administrators can do something bad, they *will*), HEW's legislative planners would explore the relaxation of rigid fiscal controls when states reach a specified level of performance.

To cite two examples of what is already law, several years back the Congress amended the Impacted Areas Program to enable states with adequate equalizing programs to count local districts' impact aid money as resources in the statewide equalizing plan, rather than be kept in a separate and inviolate category.

A second example, from the Education for All Handicapped Children Act [Sec. 613(a) (9)], modifies the usual federal prohibitions against the commingling of state and federal funds and against supplanting state and local funds with federal dollars: ". . . where the State provides clear and convincing evidence that all handicapped children have available from them a free appropriate public education, the Commissioner may waive in part the requirement of this clause if he concurs with the evidence provided by the State;"

Thus, again assuming that Congress and educational leaders agree, we may well see some important movement toward federal recognition that the several states differ and that those states which have acted in good faith and in advance of federal initiatives will not be penalized while laggard states are rewarded with federal funds. Attempts will also be made to encourage more states to adopt new or to expand existing programs in compensatory education and, insofar as possible, to enable federal and state programs to work in greater harmony rather than opposition. To do this, the Congress would have to agree to reduce the amount of societal energy which goes into record keeping and regulation and to take a more common sense approach to combining federal and state resources and human energies.

2. *Encouragement for Process-Oriented Requirements*

HEW's educational planners are familiar with a growing body of research data which indicate that planning and involvement of parents, teachers, and other community resources has an important positive impact on raising student academic performance. Thus, in place of excessive reliance on fiscal input measures, the new legislative proposals may well test one or all of the following approaches:

a. Encouragement of school-wide and district-wide needs assessment to enhance local involvement and to highlight different kinds of educational needs and prescriptions for the different subgroups served by various schools;

b. Individualized educational plans for each student, moving philosophically in the direction of P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, which requires that educators assess each child's particular needs and share that assessment and the development of an educational prescription with parents who, if they find it unacceptable, can request a review of appeal to higher authority for an educational program more suitable to their needs;

c. Greater parent and community involvement in adopting educational objectives for a school and for a district with much more widespread publicity given to the entire educational decision making process and to crucial stages of implementations;

d. School site management* and the devising of a comprehensive compensatory education plan incorporating a variety of now separate strategies. The burden of success would be placed not merely on Title I teachers, but on the entire staff which, in turn, would be linked to accountability measures at the most local level of responsibility. Parents would also be continuously informed about progress in their children's school so that the contributory benefits of parental involvement could be more fully harnessed to the educational process.

I do not mean to suggest that all of these notions of process-oriented requirements are likely to emerge full-blown from the Administration or that the Congress will necessarily adopt such concepts lock, stock, and barrel. Rather, I think that you as informed educators will wish to follow the progress of issues like these as they emerge and are debated in the political process.

3. *Better Integration of Federal Programs*

The Administration—and I believe the Congress, too—has rejected the review that there ought to be a massive consolidation of federal education programs. Such a merger seems neither politically feasible nor educationally desirable. Moreover, Washington's key role in advancing the welfare of various groups which are inadequately served at the state and local level is increasingly appreciated. If Washington does not promote particular attention to the poor and the disadvantaged, the very old and the very young, the underrepresented and the underpowered, the imbalances and inequities in our system would be even greater than they are today. Thus, broad categorical programs, sensitively designed to promote greater access and quality, deserve to be kept in place to serve their intended beneficiaries.

But even without massive consolidation, there is important work to be done. Well considered efforts might be made to filter out conflicting signals among federal programs. For example, well over 80 percent of Title I students are "pullouts," taken from their regular classes and put into special instructional settings. At the same time, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act calls for treating children in "the least restrictive environment," that is, through placement in the regular classroom, or "mainstreaming," wherever possible. Surely, Congress and the Administration can study apparent contradictions such as this one and come up with more sensible and consistent policy.

Excessive categorization can also be reduced. The Special Projects Act, which addresses such concerns as the gifted and talented, metric education, consumers' education, career education and community schools, can be made more expansive and flexible so as to allow both the states and the U.S. Office of Education discretion to fund a wider variety of innovative and developmental practices now excluded from federal support.

Moreover, large service programs, such as Title I, can be given a research and development base so that they might be strengthened by our growing inquiry into more effective practices. Educational research for the handicapped is firmly established in the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped and, thus, all of that Bureau's programs have a better opportunity to be informed and strengthened by the fruits of research and development. But the administration of Title I is divorced

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*Sometimes called School Site Lump Sum Budgeting (SSLB). See The National Urban Coalition's conference proceedings on this subject, February 24, 1978.

from R&D and, consequently, does not learn very much from experience in the field. More conscious and deliberate efforts to give federal, state, and local administrators access to new learning about compensatory education seems to be one way HEW's educational planners would like to go.

4. *Improved Federal-State-Local Coordination*

As already indicated, a major philosophical approach of the Administration seems to be a good faith effort to be more thoughtful about the impact of federal programs upon state and local program priorities. While it may never be entirely possible or totally desirable to merge federal programs and priorities with those of the states, efforts will be made to strengthen state leadership in education, to put more of the monitoring responsibility in the hands of the state education agencies, and to be more sensitive about federal initiatives which might unwittingly damage successful state and local priorities.

I worry that much of what I have been saying may seem a bit too abstract for your tastes. But until the actual Administration legislative program is unveiled—and numerous important details were still being hammered out when I left Washington—it is inappropriate to do more than give examples and to illuminate the underlying philosophical and educational basis for what the Administration will attempt to do.

Let me now mention only a few of the literally dozens of additional emerging educational policy issues which will touch your lives to greater or lesser extent in the near future:

1. *The Relationship of Formal Educational Authorities to "The Youth Employment and Demonstrations Project Act (YEDPA)," P.L. 95-93*

I am only marginally knowledgeable about this landmark educational act which is seen by many as signifying the emergence of something approaching a national youth policy. Like too many educators, I have tended to concentrate my professional attentions on what goes on in HEW and, even more narrowly, on events in the Education Division. But all of us need to think deeply about YEDPA even though it is administered by the Department of Labor. Viewed in its most promising light, the Act seems to signal a comprehensive approach to combining work and education, recreation and community service, counseling and evaluation, and a complete feedback loop for systemic institutional and individual renewal.*

Yet, despite its promise, YEDPA could become just another series of bandaids to plaster over the appalling plight of our nation's unemployed and unattended youth. Far from realizing its potential to combine the nation's resources, YEDPA could be another isolated battle in the nation's on-again, off-again battle with ignorance and poverty.

The sad truth is that at this time there is very little effective communication between the Departments of Labor and HEW about the implementation of the new Act. Something like $2.3 billion will shortly be available for the implementation of YEDPA, but the role of the schools and

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*For a careful survey of policy issues regarding education and work, pre-YEDPA, see Stern, Barry E. *Toward a Federal Policy on Education and Work,* Washington: HEW, March 1977. Also see *A Knowledge Development Plan for the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977.* Washington: Office of Youth Programs, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 1977.

the contribution of formal educational institutions and resources is far from clear.* I can only urge that as scholars and researchers—and as prudent taxpayers—you pay close attention to this issue and seek to make a constructive contribution in the implementation of this Act, P.L. 95-93.

2. *Tax Credits*

Once again, the Congress is considering, and the Administration is vigorously opposing, a variety of measures which would give tax relief to parents who pay tuition and fees to institutions of higher learning and, in some cases, to public and private schools as well. The immediate annual cost of these measures reaches from $1.2 billion in the case of Senator Roth's bill to $5.4 billion for the measure introduced by Senators Packwood and Moynihan. Important questions are being raised about what such "backdoor" or Tax Code spending would do to the availability of funds for appropriated educational programs; about the impact of such expenditures on the prospects for a balanced budget and on an effective war on inflation; about the regressiveness of the distribution of tax credit benefits; in short, about our priorities as a nation.

In my view, all tax credit measures currently before the Congress would divert scarce financial resources from those portions of our population in greatest distress to that upper fifth of our population (myself included) which can best afford to go through life without the special attention of the federal treasury. I worry, too, about the negative impact on publicly-supported education and about the erosion of our recent commitment to equal educational access through a concentration on devising progressively more effective student assistance programs.

In any case, the point I wish to stress here is that the fate of pending tax credit proposals is bound to have an important effect upon the educational programs now in law or which are proposed for consideration in the near future. Educators need to keep their eyes on the House Committee on Ways and Means and on the Senate Committee on Finance, as well as on their traditional concern with the education committees of the Congress.

3. *A Cabinet-Level Department of Education*

I am a relatively recent convert to the cause of an independent education department.** I now believe that education most likely would be better off if it did not have to compete directly with other areas of HEW for funding, for personnel slots, and for the attention of top-level policy makers. For example, I would like someone as talented as HEW Secretary Joseph Califano to work *full-time* on the problems of education, rather than see him devote at best 10 percent of his talents to our cause. Recently, Mr. Califano went to England to study national health insurance, a perfectly appropriate act. How much better for a full-time Secretary of Education to visit important educational institutions such as this National Center for Research in Vocational Education at Ohio State.

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*Kenneth B. Hoyt identified at least 20 legal obligations for education in YEDPA's provisions and concluded: "When viewed collectively, they tell us a great deal about *what* education is to do, but very little about *how* these obligations are to be met." See his "YEDPA: Obligations and Opportunities for American Education," December 1977 (mimeo.).

**See February 1978 issues of *Change Magazine* and *Phi Delta Kappan*.

4. *Educational Quality-Accountability-Testing-Basic Skills*

Like many Americans, Washington policy makers are also worried about an apparent decline in educational performance during the last decade. At various points in the policy system, one hears advocacy for a crash program to improve basic skills in reading, writing, speaking, and computation. Some would go so far as to institute a national standardized test of educational performance. President Carter is so disturbed about reports of educational failure that he has told the chief state school officers he would like to be remembered as the president who helped to assure that every child leaving the fourth grade knew how to read.

The Administration's forthcoming legislative program will stress basic skills and should find a receptive audience in the Congress. Whether increased emphasis in state plans, stepped-up research in evaluation and testing and related measures will be enough to satisfy key Washington policy makers remains to be seen. But the issue of academic performance—and the attendant controversies over "back to the basics"—will clearly be on center stage in the Washington policy arena for some time to come.

5. *Jobs*

Perhaps the most critical domestic problems facing American society is the creation of new employment as we simultaneously wrestle with the persistence of long-term unemployment. In the next decade, our country will need to create 20 million new jobs for new workers entering the labor force. This will be the largest increase in jobs in any decade in American history; in the last ten years, we created only 13 million new jobs.*

What is educational R&D's contribution to that critical problem? Better training programs and better education alone won't do the job. What will? At this point I merely wish to suggest that while problems of unemployment, for youth and for the population at large, have been with us for some time, all of us will be hearing more in the near future about macro-economic policy, capital formation, technology transfer, and all of the dozens of components of an effective national policy to address this newly emergent issue: American society's ability to create 20 million new jobs or face the consequences of economic drag and increasing social alienation.

Allow me now to turn your attention to questions specifically related to vocational education and educational research. During the seventeen years that I have been privileged to work with federal education policy, I have been struck by the apparent contradiction between Congress' continuing public support for vocational education legislation and appropriations and congressmen's mostly privately expressed strong criticism of vocational education and vocational educators. Generally, the scorn does *not* apply to the many fine vocational education programs in the member's own district, just to all the other vocational educators "out there" in the rest of the country! (This puzzling phenomenon seems akin to one pollsters have frequently observed in which a large majority of the American people voice deep concern over the future of the United States and feel that serious national decline lies ahead. At the same time, a very substantial majority of the respondents believe that their *own* personal future will be bright.)

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*Norris, William C. *Technology and Full Employment.* Minneapolis: Control Data Corporation, November 1977.

The facts of vocational education's amazing growth are known to many of you. Propelled, at least in part, by the Vocational Education Acts of 1963 and 1968, vocational education's fortunes have expanded rapidly. During the twelve-year period from Fiscal Year 1965 to 1976, total enrollments in federally aided vocational education increased 174 percent, with the growth in postsecondary offerings rising by a whopping 947 percent. Fifteen million Americans are now enrolled in vocational programs compared with only 5.4 million a dozen years ago. Today, vocational education serves 70 of every 1,000 Americans, more than triple the 21 per 1,000 enrolled in 1961. (See Table 3.)

Dollar growth has also been remarkable. In FY 1976, all governmental expenditures for vocational education exceeded $5.1 billion, a 752 percent increase over those in FY 1965. While federal vocational education expenditures rose from $157 to $543 million (up "a mere" 246 percent), state and local funding rose from $448 million to $4.6 billion—an incredible 929 percent.

TABLE 3

Enrollment in and Expenditures for Federally Aided Vocational Education Classes: Fiscal Years 1965 and 1976

Item	1965	1976	Percentage increase 1965 to 1976
Enrollment in federally aided vocational education classes			
Total	5,430,611	14,874,574	173.9
Secondary	2,819,250	8,740,148	210.0
Postsecondary	207,201	2,169,112	946.9
Adult	2,378,522	3,965,314	66.7
Special Needs[1]	25,638	2,157,473	([2])
Total population[3]	194,303,000	215,118,000	10.7
Enrollment in vocational education as percent of total population	2.8	6.9	———
Governmental expenditures for vocational education (in thousands):			
Total	$ 604,600	$ 5,150,225	751.8
Federal	156,900	543,211	246.2
State and local	447,700	4,607,014	929.0

[1] Disadvantaged and handicapped persons included in distribution by level.

[2] Percent not shown because data for 1976 are not strictly comparable with those for 1965.

[3] Bureau of the Census estimates as of July 1, 1965, and July 1, 1976, including Armed Forces overseas.

SOURCE: Enrollment and expenditure data derived from reports of the Division of Vocational and Technical Education, U.S. Office of Education.

Compiled 1/30/78 by Dr. Vance Grant, National Center for Education Statistics, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Yet, fully six decades after the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, Congress and the Administration—any administration, Democratic or Republican—continue to worry about the efficacy of this large and growing federal investment in vocational education. Indeed, it is highly significant for the future of vocational education that the Carter Administration's Fiscal Year 1979 overall education budget requests the largest increase since 1965 while, at the same time, it proposes a "hold the line" budget for vocational education generally and a 17 percent decrease for consumer and homemaking education. (All vocational education for FY 1978: $642,161,000 vs. $635,161,000 for FY 1979. The reduction is entirely attributable to the homemaking cut from $40,994,000 to $33,994,000.) Clearly, this Executive Branch is skeptical about the value of vocational education and prefers to place its chips on such priorities as Title I of ESEA, education of the handicapped, and student financial assistance.

But what of Congress? In an effort to identify specific values held by the members, I asked ten key congressional staffers—on both sides of Capitol Hill, on both sides of the party aisle—to list the criticisms of vocational education that they heard members express in the recent past. The responses bore a remarkable similarity to each other. While members of Congress believe there are many fine vocational programs, including, as I have already noted, some in their own congressional district or states, they worry that the following kinds of statements *may be* only too true*:

1. Vocational education provides irrelevant skills training for today's job market and, especially, for tomorrow's economy. Vocational education is delinquent in providing basic educational skills, particularly the communication skills so necessary for a rapidly changing society.**

2. Although Congress has been urging training in new job areas, vocational education insists on maintaining the old categories (e.g., trade and industrial, agriculture, etc.).

3. Vocational education is run by an encrusted, defensive, unprogressive educational establishment, unwilling to cooperate with society's other trainers for employment. Vocational education faculty don't keep up-to-date and think too narrowly, that is, only about their own vocation.

4. Vocational education is dominated by rural, vocational agricultural interests and, therefore, consistently shortchanges the cities.

5. Vocational education (and home economics in particular) is discriminatory toward women, minorities, and the handicapped and much of vocational education is sex-stereotyped.

6. Vocational education devotes too many resources to high school programs when most young people now go on to community colleges and other postsecondary education programs.

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*Also see Jennings, John F. "Emerging Issues in Vocational Education," *American Vocational Journal*, September 1975, pages 29-32.

**Also see Walsh, Jack. "Vocational Education: Education or Short-Run Training Program?" Olympus Research Corporation, November, 1977, page 11.

7. Vocational education is delinquent in statistical collection and "hard-nosed" program evaluation so that Congress and the taxpayer cannot know whether programs are effective or even in proper compliance with federal statutes.

8. Vocational education refuses to engage in effective statewide planning so that a state's needs and resources might be better matched.

9. Vocational education frustrates coordination with other levels and governance structures in education and spends most of its energy protecting turf.

10. Vocational education is too institution-oriented to school-age populations and doesn't care enough about the unemployed and about out-of-school youth. Thus, the nation is forced to create an array of costly job training programs outside the formal educational structure.

There are other congressional criticisms as well, but these will give you the flavor of my survey. There is also a good deal of respect for some of the impressive quantitative changes in vocational education during the past fifteen years and for the enduring political sophistication of many vocational educators.

But the major point I would make while at this National Center for Research in Vocational Education is that these perceptions *cry out for research* which might corroborate or dispel such views among influential policy makers. Indeed, I can think of no finer way for a national R&D Center such as this—and for a variety of cooperating academic disciplines at Ohio State—to make a major contribution to vocational education in this country than to deal with the researchable aspects of the complaints and allegations I have just cited. By sweeping away the myths and by pointing the needed spotlight of reform on areas of documented shortcoming, you will be helping to remove the most redoubtable barriers to the further growth and development of effective occupational education programs in our nation. And for that you shall, in turn, receive not only the taxpayer's continuing financial support, but also his/her vote of sincere thanks.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: What kind of information would be helpful in convincing congressmen that some of those ten concepts you mentioned are not accurate?

First, I would bring congressmen, congressional staff, state legislators, and state legislators' staffs to visit and experience vocational education programs that work well.

I remember being part of a federal delegation that visited a vocational school in the most depressed counties of Kentucky. We talked to students who were studying diesel mechanics. We asked these kids how they liked their studies. They expressed enthusiasm. We asked them their plans after completing school. They said they were going to get a job. We asked, "Do you think you will be able to find a job?" "Sure," they replied. "We've already had several job offers from private employers."

The point is that it was impossible for anybody in that delegation to feel those kids were studying an irrelevant occupation or were getting irrelevant skill training, because the kids *knew* what the job market was. The same was true in other classes we visited in that same vocational school.

That may sound too simple-minded, but I think most congressmen learn more through their ears and through personal experiences with constituents than through reading reports. If you can give policy makers an experiential dimension, such as taking them to campuses, to schools, etc., that would be fine.

There are other things that count, such as testimonials from successful and satisfied people. Obviously when a plant manager or president of a corporation praises the output of a given school, curriculum, or program, that means a lot. Congressmen assume business persons worry about profits and losses and are best able to judge a "good" program.

There are many other things to be done, but the key to it all is to talk with policy makers. Most educators, regardless of which discipline they are in, don't spend enough time explaining in simple, non-jargon English, what it is they do. They should let the consumer of the product—in this case, the student—speak up, or cause the legislators to see the work shops, the work benches, etc., where things are happening.

I also believe it is possible to affect the political processes of this country by the judicious courting of the press. Most people know what they know in large part, from the headlines they read in the newspaper or from what they see in brief snatches of TV. The reporting of education by journalistic and other media is notably poor. Thus, to the extent that you can inform and encourage education writers, and help them to grow in their sophistication and understanding, you will also benefit.

Institutions such as the National Center can also make an important contribution by writing executive summaries of otherwise tedious, cumbersome, and jargon-ridden reports. Someone at the National Center has to remember and think about the simple communicability of your very important studies. The point is to build a bridge between those studies and the ordinary words and thinking of the men and women who serve in our legislatures.

Question: There seems to be a small portion of the education budget allocated to vocational education. Yet vocational education seems to be held the most accountable for its actions. Do you agree?

Funding for vocational education at the federal level is not small. It approaches $1 billion a year. There are only a few areas that receive more, so it has been a very important area. I am not aware that the requirements for output or performance are essentially different in this area than they are in compensatory education or in postsecondary education. Some of you are familiar with FIPSE—HEW's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. Its grantees have to show results in three years. Generally speaking, most of the federal discretionary programs are a bit like the programs funded by the philanthropic foundations. They will fund a good project for three to five years and assume that "truth will prevail" and that, somehow, state and local people will pick up the costs later.

Perhaps that's not directly responsive to your question because I am having a bit of trouble with your premise. In short, I have not observed that vocational education is treated any more harshly than other educational areas.

Question: In recent years it seems that Congress has been writing laws and appropriating funds on the basis of very detailed and tedious instructions that leave little room for flexibility within the discretion of those administering funds and the education community in utilizing funds. What are your insights?

First of all, let's go back to what I tried to say. These notions, these philosophical underpinnings, are just that. They are notions from the Executive Branch which are about to be tried out on the Congress, and about to be tried out on the education community.

In the last eight to ten years, there was much tension between the Executive and the Legislative Branches in part because of the split party (Dem—Rep) control. By and large, the Executive Branch became irrelevant to congressional considerations, and congressmen began to view the Executive Branch as the enemy. They began viewing *all* bureaucracy at the state and the federal levels as the enemy. They began prescribing, proscribing, prohibiting, and mandating, often in great detail, exactly what was supposed to be done by the executives. For example, the backers of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976 went so far as to argue that all necessary regulations were written into law, so that the Executive Branch couldn't add any more regulations.

Now I did say that I wouldn't expect all of these proposals to emerge full blown from the Executive Branch, and I wouldn't expect the Congress to buy them lock, stock, and barrel. There should be a debate, which would be interesting for a change, about what we in education really believe, and what we wish to see happen.

There is a beginning of support for the notion that if California does something right in advance of the federal government, it shouldn't have to go back to square one and start all over again, just because Washington has "finally caught up." The same would be true of Minnesota or Ohio. The tension is there because of the effective work of a group of new educational planners in the Executive Branch who are about to test these ideas on the Congress and the education community.

Moreover, much of the prescriptive language that occurs in federal statutes does not come from congressmen who are trying to oppress educators. Much of it comes from one group in society

that doesn't trust or agree with another group in society. So the group goes to Congress and legislation is influenced in a particular way. The recent handicapped legislation, P.L. 94-142, is a good example. Outraged parents of handicapped children for a long time have been saying, "We can't get a square deal for our kids." Even though a number of states were moving in the direction of meeting the problem, many parents weren't happy. So they went to the courts and to Congress and asked them to prescribe the most detailed, the most inclusive federal requirements of any education statute yet. So if the Administration were to come along and say, "Let's loosen up the requirements of the handicapped legislation," it wouldn't only be the Executive Branch versus the Congress, but also the Executive Branch versus those parents and organized interest groups that are not willing to trust in the goodness of educators to do the right thing.

Question: What problems do you see in implementing a Department of Education?

The greatest single problem in getting a Department of Education will be in convincing the members of the House of Representatives that this really is a priority concern. They have so much of their legislative platter to work on now that it will be hard to get their attention.

The next problem will be to decide what goes into the department and what does not. One can design departments of education so that they include labor programs and manpower programs from the Department of Labor, arts and humanities programs from the endowments, and programs such as Head Start from HEW's Office of Children, Youth, and Family Development, etc. But every time one urges a transfer, there is a bureaucratic turf fight. Some of those turf fights are very costly in energy and in time and they can get very brutal. So the problem is first to get the attention of the members, particularly in the House, and, second, to develop an acceptable compromise on the composition of the department.

Question: What is your prognosis for career education?

The Administration did not recommend any funding at all for the new Hathaway-Perkins Career Education Act that was enacted last year. The career education money they requested is authorized by the Special Projects Act. The Administration's position seems to be that career education ought to compete for funding, not be a sheltered funding area. I would guess that, in the way our democratic system works, Congress would find a way to put some money into the new act.

Question: Some suggest that a further departmentalization of the federal government is a constraint. What do you think?

Coordination is something we all talk about and something which is very difficult to achieve. One of the reasons I belatedly came around to supporting a department of education is that it is hard to coordinate anything between unequals. There is a Secretary of Labor running the manpower and youth employment programs. There is a Level 5, the lowest federal executive department, called the U.S. Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner of Education will have a budget of about $13 billion, larger than most cabinet departments. But because of this difference in status and clout, which exists in all parts of our society, it's very difficult, if not impossible, to set real coordination. Coordination works best, if at all, among equals, rather than asking pygmies to deal with bureaucratic giants.

If the Secretary of Education could concentrate full-time on educational problems, possibly there could be more cooperation and coordination with other cabinet officers. Right now, HEW Secretary Califano doesn't put in more than 10 percent of his time in education, according to my best estimates. He's dealing with all the toughest problems—health cost, national health insurance, social security, drugs, anti-cigarette campaigns, etc., so education is really a small area of his concern. A cabinet department might bring someone with Mr. Califano's talents to address educational issues full-time and comprehensively. In any case, there really isn't much coordination at this point.

Question: How do elected officials in large cities feel about vocational education?

I can't claim any firsthand expertise on their opinions concerning vocational education. My guess would be that these wouldn't vary much from what Congress believes, although it might be more directed toward points they are familiar with in their own schools and neighborhoods.

I wrote a two-page article in the *Kappan* of November 1974 entitled "Politicians and Educators: Two World Views." I am rather proud of that article because it is short and simple, and because it has served peoples' needs in getting an answer to the question posed. I simply listened to what politicians said about educators and to what educators said about politicians. There really is a serious cleavage that must be overcome if we are to advance together as a society.

Question: There seems to be a discrepancy among federal, state, and local priorities, especially in the areas of equal access, subpopulations, etc. Do you share that view?

I would describe it differently. There are some states that are way ahead of the federal government. Then in the middle there is the federal government and the bulk of the states. Then there are some laggard states. California, for example, doesn't seem to be able to do anything wrong when it comes to money. The state is incredibly wealthy. Its leading technological industries are almost depression proof. California's budget goes up 20 percent over the year before. They fund a lot of new programs, and there is still enough money left over for tax relief. It is not a surprise to find that in the state of California they not only pass authorization bills but they actually appropriate $1 billion of new money a year. For a state which is 10 percent of the country, that sum far surpasses federal spending on a relative basis. Additionally, California has some very progressive legislation. There are other states that are way ahead of the federal government, especially in the handicapped area and the education of the disadvantaged. One of the reasons I am sharing my enthusiasm with you about what I understand to be the Administration's approach is that, for the first time, an administration is recognizing that the states aren't always wrong. The states may, indeed, be ahead of the federal government and that's what must be recognized, rather than force all the states into a common mold that retards the advances of some pioneers.

Your general observation is exactly on target. There is often a general discrepancy between the state, local, and national priorities. Because of that discrepancy, I don't think we will see the elimination of all categorical or special programs. There seems to be widespread agreement among Democrats and Republicans that if the federal government does anything at all, it must worry about and advance special populations—language-limited, the handicapped, the elderly, the very young, etc., rather than concentrate on general and routine financial arrangements. The best thing that could happen, then, would be to fine tune that federal commitment to special populations. But I haven't seen any really effective challenges yet to try to get the federal government out of the special populations business and into general aid.

Question: On the ten criticisms of vocational education, you mentioned that the National Center should conduct studies on these and turn in evidence. Would these studies be credible?

Yes, provided they are, first, timely. One of the great complaints is that the studies always come in after Congress has already extended the law. Members and staff claim they are working in a factual vacuum, that they simply don't know what is right.

John Brademas, third ranking leader in the House of Representatives, frequently quotes Lyndon Baines Johnson to the effect that, "My problem isn't in doing what is right; my problem is knowing what is right. Your research studies are arcane and written in a language that I (Brademas is an Oxford alumnus) can't understand."

The answer again is yes, but the studies have to be aimed at where the people are. If I were the secretary of the American Vocational Association I would want to see what we could find out about the researchable aspects of those allegations. I think a lot of people would listen to timely, usable, solid research.

Question: Would this mean the National Center is an apologist for vocational education?

You must prove that you are the *National Center* for Research in Vocational Education, that you are a national resource for all the taxpayers, not just for vocational educators. To the extent that you can do that you are going to have a long and healthy future.

Question. How about the things that are being done well in vocational education?

I am not knowledgeable about the evaluation of those programs, but I can tell you that those same policy makers who are responsible for the advanced political and philosophical approaches I described for elementary and secondary education are very dubious about vocational education. As of now, I'd guess their preferences would resist funding increases. Again, I don't know what the evaluation literature says. I saw one study that concludes that the employment rate of recent vocational graduates is better than the employment rate of all graduates. I don't remember if it was at the secondary or postsecondary level. We need studies that raise similar questions which have an important effect on the public purse. I have not seen many.

Question: Is research the only answer to dispelling these views?

As one of the allegations said, there have to be either hard nosed evaluations or sensible record keeping so that you can document your case. Let's just say it's all out there somewhere; until it gets to the ultimate consumer, namely the legislator and other policy makers, it doesn't count.

I started working in Washington half a year before Mr. Kennedy became president. Then, in 1961 I moved over to the Executive Branch. I discovered that the Executive Branch had a kind of mind-set about vocational education—that vocational education was really anti-diluvian, almost Neanderthal. It needed to be brought into the twentieth century. A lot of that mind-set came about as the result of critical articles in popular magazines like *Atlantic Monthly* or *Harper's*. So, I think the Office of Education has to do a better job of making sure that what is known from research is translated into public discussion, quickly and effectively.

One of the other things that the Administration is going to try to do, if Congress agrees, is to put R&D at work alongside service programs, specifically Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Acts. That title affects over $3 billion. But the Administration doesn't have much capability to learn from so-called exemplary or successful Title I projects. One notion they are urging is that every major service area ought to have its own R&D capability. If implemented, that might mean that this National Center would have access to funds not only in NIE and in the Department of Labor, but also in the Adult and Occupational Education Bureau, alongside the state plan grant programs.

Question: You mentioned the lack of coordination in the vocational education establishment at the federal level. Aren't there social and economic phenomena that affect the level of coordination that is required?

The answer is probably yes, but you still have to try. There are a lot of things that aren't going to happen unless there is an accumulation or aggregation of resources brought to bear on a common problem. I don't know the cause of the phenomena, whether it be insecurity, lack of knowledge, or simply difficulty of delivery. It's interesting to me that the very same congressmen who create the education statutes create the employment and training programs. They serve on the same committees. They just change their hats. One day they are sitting on a Labor Subcommittee; the next day they are sitting on an Education Subcommittee. They create these programs which often have built-in impediments to cooperation between Labor and HEW, between manpower and education. I don't have any great wisdom on the subject, but I have been amazed at the inconsistency which often abounds because we're not really very conscious of what we are doing across the board.

Question: Isn't the country, in general, becoming more conservative and less willing to accept new ideas?

The short answer would be no, but the real answer is yes. The short answer is that the country may be conservative and doesn't want a lot of interventions and radical, new delivery systems, or a lot of new experimentation. That would be the first answer, but I think tax credits—and I use that as a social policy example—are enormously radical, if by radical you mean not good or bad, but simply a marked change. If we can get $250 or $500 tax credits now, and perhaps one day get $2,000 or $5,000 tax credits, then we could do away with public education all together. That's the ultimate voucher because if I want to send my child to a parochial school and the federal government will pick up a piece of the tab, what would be more radical? Yet of course it isn't sold as a radical idea. It's sold as an anti-bureacratic, conservative idea. The proponents say, "I don't want any more government programs. They are all failures. I don't want bureaucrats telling me they fine tune the system. I want to put purchasing power in the hands of parents."

My fear and the fear of many people in Washington is that we may break the bank; spend $1.5 billion in student aid for middle class parents; then spend several billion dollars in tax credit, and the country will go into an inflationary spin because there is too much public money in circulation.

Question: Where did you get the information on the ten criticisms you stated?

The information comes from ten congressional staffers on both sides of the Hill—Democrats and Republicans who have been around for quite a while. They are not saying these things are necessarily *true*. They are saying these are *perceptions* on the part of members. All I'm urging is, why don't you check them out? I think the indictments ought to be treated for what they are, namely, a checklist of interesting views that may be worthy of framing research projects. I would urge the Office of Education, or NIE, or anyone else who is interested, to make your research "relevant," whatever that means. If they want to fund something that has immediate pay-off in areas that the Congress cares about, this checklist may well suggest a fruitful research agenda.